REMARKS

Amendment to Claim

Claim 1 is amended to recite a conical ramp extending out of said first annular groove toward said second annular groove to cooperate with said elastically expandable inner diameter of said retainer ring for facilitating movement of said retainer ring out of said first groove and along said shaft to said second groove. The disclosure for the amended language can be found in Figs. 6 and 7 and paragraph 32 of the application.

It is believed that the amendments herein fully address the concerns raised in the Office Action and place the claims in condition for allowance. In the event that, for some reason, the claims are still deemed not to be allowable, it is nevertheless requested that the amendments be entered, if only for purposes of clarifying issues on appeal.

Claim Rejection under 35 USC § 103

Claims 1 and 3-7 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Skinner* 4,428,718 in view of *Ota* 6,629,823.

Best shown in Fig. 1 of *Skinner* (See attached Exhibit 1) is a thrust washer 32 having a fixed inner diameter that is substantially smaller than the outer diameter of the driveshaft. The inner diameter of the thrust washer may nest onto a portion of tapered section of the drive shaft to prevent the orbiting of the thrust washer, but contrary to the assertion of the of the Office Action, the thrust washer is incapable of movement out of the groove and onto the drive shaft 26 during normal operations of the compressor. The thrust washer will only be capable of movement onto the drive shaft if the thrust wash is plastically deformed as a result of a structural

failure or from a destructive act. If the thrust washer does move upon the drive shaft, then there would be no other means to axially retaining the drive shaft 26 inward of the radial bearing 30 as taught by *Skinner* (column 2, lines 34-40), resulting in the failure of the compressor.

In contrast, Applicants' invention provides for a conical ramp extending out of the first annular groove toward the second annular groove to cooperate with an expandable diameter retainer for facilitating movement of the retainer ring out of the first groove along the shaft to the second groove. The purpose of the retainer ring of Applicants' invention is not for retaining the position of the drive shaft, but for the purpose of allowing a common drive shaft to be used with either a pneumatic or an electronic compressor depending on whether the retainer ring is located within the first or second annual groove.

Claim 1 recites a conical ramp extending out of said first annular groove toward said second annular groove to cooperate with said elastically expandable inner diameter of said retainer ring for facilitating movement of said retainer ring out of said first groove and along said shaft to said second groove without plastic deformation of the retainer. *Skinner* teaches away from Applicants' invention, by teaching a tapered section adapted to maintain the position of a fixed inner diameter thrust washer 32 between the right-hand side of the first annular groove and cylinder block 20. *Ota* does not overcome the short-comings of *Skinner*. Claim 1 is patentably distinguishable over *Skinner*. Claims 3-7 ultimately depend upon claim 1. It is respectfully requested that the rejection for claims 1 and 3-7 be withdrawn, and that the claims be allowed.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1 and 3-7 are now currently pending and are in condition for allowance. If it would further prosecution of the application, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned at the phone number provided.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees associated with this communication to Deposit Account No. 50-0831.

Respectfully submitted,

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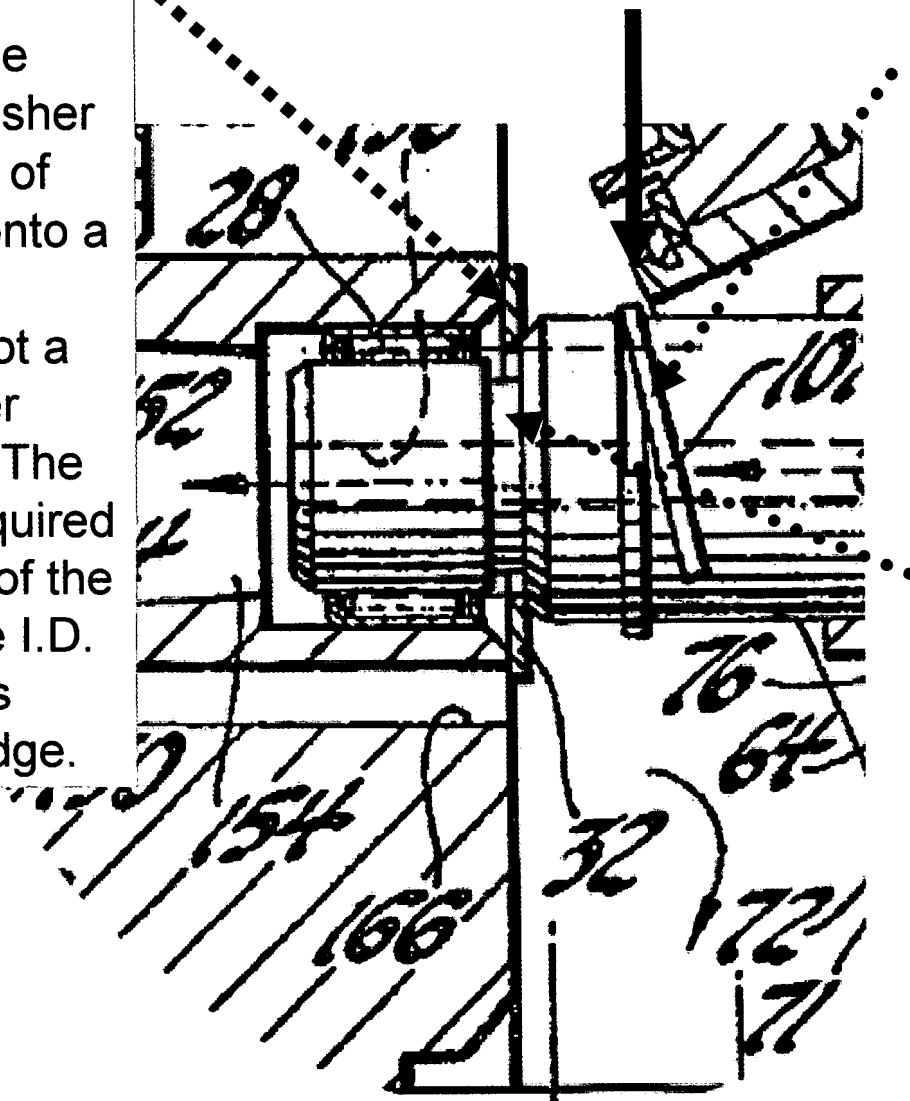
Exhibit 1

Solid steel axial thrust washer shown in Skinner can NOT be expanded. The washer slides over the end of shaft and centers onto a tapered edge (the angled feature is not a expandable retainer installation ramp). The tapered edge is required to prevent orbiting of the thrust washer. The I.D. of the washer nests onto the tapered edge.



Skinner patent

DETAIL A-A